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Some moderators of the work stress- burnout relationship

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intrapsychic modes. The first includes taking tranquillizers, alcohol and other drugs, meditation, muscle relaxation, and biofeedback therapy. Intrapsychic modes include such mechanisms as denial, selective attention, repression, reaction formation, displacement and intellectualisation, and induced feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. It appears these mechanisms are not necessarily subconscious or unconscious. Lazarus and Launier (1978) suggest that intrapsychic defense methods are favoured in situations characterised by high ambiguity, conflict and helplessness. Symptoms of the burnout syndrome would clearly suggest that they relate to defense methods rather than to active problem-solving methods.

Instrumental, or problem-focused coping (Folkman, 1982), and palliative (emotion-focused) coping often occur simultaneously, and practically every stressful encounter uses both methods (Folkman, 1982). Often the one can facilitate the other, for example where a person feels it necessary to first control emotions such as anxiety or anger in order to be able to engage constructively in the problem-solving activity. Occasionally there is conflict between the two modes, for example, excessive alcohol intake may enable a person to cope emotionally with job loss but inhibit his or her obtaining another position. Frequently, it is necessary to rely more heavily on one form of coping than another, such as avoidance tactics versus problem-solving; as the situation changes so should one's strategy, and the value of continual reappraisal is emphasised when this does in fact occur.

Though coping can serve to improve a person's wellbeing by alleviating stress, the converse may be true if the choice of strategy is

inappropriate. For example, fighting back when it is more appropriate to flee could lead to highly undesirable consequences! Similarly, if burnout is conceptualised as an inadequate form of coping, and one that is self-reinforcing (Cherniss, 1980), the result is a continual deterioration in the individual's wellbeing. Plainly, personality differences cause individuals to vary in their experience of stress and in their methods of appraisal and coping.

Several differences with respect to individual stress response and coping ability have been identified. Listed in Hackman's (1970) classification of strategies for coping with stress is the distortion of situations via the intrapsychic palliation methods already mentioned. This embodies the concept of 'defensive reappraisal' (Lazarus, 1966, 1976) and the process effects a perceptual distortion of the true situation. Since stress relates to a perceptual imbalance between demand and capability, if perceptual mechanisms can be altered this provides a very powerful stress management technique. Even the perceived importance of coping may be altered (Cox, 1978). However, the alteration of cognitive appraisal can have desirable and undesirable effects. Psychological techniques of appraisal modification can cause a more realistic appraisal of a problem situation, build self confidence, and change attitudes and priorities. For certain problems this may be countereffective:

> "... a more realistic appraisal of a difficult situation may place the person under greater stress if he had underestimated the extent of his troubles. Furthermore, attitude change resulting in the person no longer believing that failing to cope is important, may cause the precipitation of more severe problems if failing to cope is important." (Cox, 1978: 118).

Both these situations could apply to students on the MBA Programme who find it far more demanding than they had originally perceived it to be.

In terms of the concept of demand, Lazarus (1976) indicates that stress can alter the perception of time, and this may be an important factor in the individual's deciding the balance between perceived demand and perceived capability. Lazarus (1976) has also shown that the perception of stress can vary with attitude. Furthermore, with a severe or continual stress experience, behaviour tends to become disorganised (Cox, 1978) and reasoning processes can more readily switch from a logical to an emotional basis (Cox, 1978). Coping with the source of stress will therefore be affected. In terms of the present study it is possible that subjects may fluctuate in their ability to accurately appraise self- efficacy, and particularly so because one of the symptoms of burnout is a growing sense of inadequacy and non-achievement (Cherniss, 1980; Maslach, 1976, 1982a, 1982b). If perceived capability (self-efficacy belief) becomes distorted, it may have no effect in mitigating the effects of burnout, but may in fact increase it.

With regard to the person-environment interaction model of stress, mention was made earlier of intervening variables relating to the individual which condition response to the stressor. Included among these are personality variables that may enhance the individual's attempts at coping, although some reservation has been expressed regarding the adoption of a moderator approach to assess coping (Holroyd and Lazarus, 1982). One such personality variable is hardiness, conceptualised by Kobasa (1979, 1981, 1982, 1983) and her

associates as a combination of three existential constructs, namely commitment, control and challenge.

Committed people have the skill and desire to cope successfully with stress (Kobasa, 1982) while people who have control in effect have coping skills, and exercise both decisional ability regarding the course of action to follow, and cognitive control regarding the interpretation and appraisal of stressors in order to incorporate them into a 'working plan' (Fisher, 1984). Rotter (1966) has emphasised that the tendency to perceive whether control is possible or not itself constitutes a variable personality disposition. The importance of challenge is based on the belief that individuals accept change as a norm rather than a threat.

In the present study hardiness is one of the personality variables which will be assessed in terms of its usefulness in buffering stress, because it forms an integral part of the transformational coping process. This type of coping employs a cognitive approach which involves positive and constructive thought and action, and accords with Lazarus's (1966, 1976, 1981) conceptualisation of instrumental coping. The individual deliberately seeks to interact with and alter events so that they are perceived as less stressful and therefore less likely to lead to personal strain (or burnout).

There is a feedback loop between coping and the personal variables. Whether the person experiences success or failure in attempts to cope will influence the further development of some of the psychological conditioning variables, and this will influence all future conditioning

processes (Ferguson, 1984; Strümpfer, 1983a). Hardiness represents a psychological, as opposed to physical, conditioning variable. It is this psychological dimension with which the present study is concerned.

2.2 The stress-coping-burnout link

The specific outcome of stress with which the present study is concerned is burnout, and burnout has already been conceptualised as a form of coping (Cherniss, 1980; Fruedenberger, 1980; Gaines and Jermier, 1983; Maslach and Jackson, 1984a, 1984b) which can have severe consequences for the individual. It is no coincidence that several of the characteristic signs of burnout mirror those of intrapsychic palliation (Lazarus, 1976). It is not appropriate to speak of these as 'defence mechanisms' because this term adopts a psychoanalytical framework in referring to unconscious psychological manoeuvres (Freud, 1946; Cox, 1978), but they are akin to the mechanisms of identification, displacement, repression, denial, reaction formation, projection and intellectualisation as discussed by Lazarus (1976). Burned out individuals (Cherniss, 1980; Maslach, 1982a; Pines and Aronson, 1981) typically manifest displacement of aggression, inhibiting its expression toward superiors but displaying it toward clients and subordinates in a frustrating work situation. In addition, they exhibit denial in terms of cynicism, and intellectualisation in the form of emotional detachment, impatience and omnipotence. Reaction formation is manifested in the form of depersonalisation, which Maslach and Jackson (1984a, 1984b) have argued develops as a coping response to work overload, and which Savicki and

Cooley (1983) maintain can be invoked by rigid and controlling administrative practices.

Burnout may be regarded as one particular kind of response to aversive working conditions (Farber, 1983; Jones, 1981; Lazarus and Cohen, 1977; Maslach, 1982a; Shinn, 1982; Strümpfer, 1983a; Sweeney, 1981; Tubesing and Tubesing, 1982) that constitutes a particular syndrome of occupational stress (Cherniss, 1980; Farber, 1983; Jones, 1981). There is no doubt that unmediated stress is directly linked to burnout (Carroll and White, 1982; Cherniss, 1980, 1982, Etzion, 1984; Freudenberger, 1980; Niehouse, 1981; Shinn, 1982) and that burnout represents a final stage (Burke and Deszca, 1982, 1986; Farber, 1983; Golembiewski et al, 1981; Glicken and Janka, 1984; Perlman and Hartman, 1981, 1982) which requires some form of therapeutic intervention in order to facilitate a remediation (Freudenberger, 1980).

The burnout syndrome includes signs and symptoms which are closely allied with those of stress, and Cherniss (1980) lists these as the following:

TABLE 4: Signs and symptoms of job stress most commonly associated with burnout

1. High resistance to going to work every day
2. A sense of failure
3. Anger and Resentment
4. Guilt and blame
5. Discouragement and indifference
6. Negativism
7. Isolation and withdrawal
8. Feeling tired and exhausted all day
9. Frequent clock-watching
10. Great fatigue after work
11. Loss of positive feelings toward clients
12. Postponing client contacts, resist client phone calls and office visits
13. Sterotyping clients

14. Inability to concentrate on or listen to what clients are saying
15. Feeling immobilized
16. Cynicism regarding clients; a blaming attitude
17. Increasingly 'going by the book'
18. Sleep disorders
19. Avoiding discussion of work with colleagues
20. Self-preoccupation
21. More approving of behaviour-control measures such as tranquillizers
22. Frequent colds and 'flu
23. Frequent headaches and gastrointestinal disturbances
24. Rigidity in thinking and resistance to change
25. Excessive use of drugs
26. Marital and family conflict
27. High absenteeism

(Cherniss, 1980: 17)

Some of the strains produced by prolonged levels of job stress are analagous to burnout symptoms, for example, irritability, tension and fatigue, cynicism and alienation, and because Cherniss (1980) contends burnout can be regarded as an adaptati to stress, these symptoms typically represent the coping strategies mentioned earlier, to which individuals resort in order to alleviate stress.

TABLE 5 categorises stress and burnout symptoms as proposed by Niehouse (1981) in an attempt to clarify the burnout syndrome. In it, burnout is portrayed as typically representing an extreme advancement of the stress conditions, but this gives rise to some confusion. In terms of the earlier discussion on uses of the terms 'stress' and 'strain', Niehouse (1981) has chosen the word 'stress' to convey what we now understand as 'strain'. These strains have resulted from the inability to successfully accommodate perceived stresses, or in terms of Cox and Mackay's (1976) model, from the imbalance between perceived demands and perceived capabilities. Niehouse (1981) appears to have defined burnout as the chronic dimension of the strains arising from stress,

following which medical and psychotherapeutic counselling are required for its alleviation.

The value of Niehouse's (1981) classification lies in the recognition that burnout is a predominantly emotional response to stress. Stress is often described in terms related to emotions and in TABLE 5 all the burnout symptoms may be described as incorporating emotional aspects. Again, this supports the contention (Lazarus, 1976) that burnout represents for the most part palliative (emotion-regulating) coping by way of intrapsychic mechanisms. Burnout is essentially an emotion-related phenomenon, and in Harvey's (1981) model it is conceptualised as involving the need to separate or distance oneself from others, which incorporates the emotional dimension. Burnout also appears to be correlated with various self-reported indices of personal dysfunction related to emotional issues such as mental exhaustion, insomnia, increased use of drugs and alcohol, and marital and family problems (Maslach and Jackson, 1981).

The symptoms of burnout in many respects mirror those of depression as formulated by Beck (1967). However, in response to the inference that burnout is essentially a reactive depression, Freudenberger (1981) points out that depression is frequently accompanied by guilt whereas burnout generally occurs in the context of conscious anger. This is particularly true in the 'caring' professions where helpers, often idealistic and self- motivating achievers, experience frustration and a decline in efficacious behaviour.

TABLE 5: A comparison of symptoms: Stress and Burnout

Stress	Burnout
1. Fatigue	1. Chronic fatigue
2. Anxiety	2. Unfulfilled need for recognition
3. Job dissatisfaction	3. Job boredom and cynicism
4. Less commitment	4. Detachment/denial of feelings
5. Moodiness	5. Impatience/irritability, paranoia, and feelings of omnipotence
6. Guilt	6. Depression
7. Poor concentration/ forgetfulness	7. Disorientation/forgetfulness
8. Physiological changes (for example, increased blood pressure)	8. Psychosomatic complaints

(Niehouse, 1981: 28)

There is general agreement that burnout can be considered the result of a type of job stress, but its uniqueness lies in the people involvement peculiar to social interaction (Maslach, 1982a). People themselves are the predominant source of the emotional strain that manifests itself as burnout. The favoured measure of burnout, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (1981), was in fact constructed following a consistent pattern of research findings linking burnout with emotional feelings and problematic issues specifically associated with people in health and service occupations (Maslach and Jackson, 1981).

Though there are differences between experienced stress and burnout, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the trend will continue

whereby burnout will cease to be treated as a separate research area and will become incorporated into the larger sphere of stress. As this takes place, intervention techniques to counteract its symptoms should be equally as valid for burnout as they are for stress (Paine, 1982).

The purpose of the current section is to examine in some detail the concepts of stress, coping and burnout. Inherent in the foregoing is the fact that stress and burnout are inextricably linked: stress can result in the strain of burnout. Burnout symptoms are often described in emotional terms but it has been seen to in fact involve psychophysiological aspects and to develop from specific conditions, of which work overload was an earlier quoted example. As burnout is a focal issue in the present study, it is an opportune time to examine more precisely what is meant by the concept and whether the term is appropriate in describing the condition. Despite the relatively recent awareness of burnout, diverse definitions and explanations exist to explain its nature.

2.3 Definitions of burnout

Maslach (1976) proposed an early definition of burnout during her original studies on emotion. She was investigating the ways in which people interpret and understand their emotional states, and how they maintained reasonable behaviour under trying conditions. Breakdown was noted as frequently occurring in the area of human caring, and

Maslach consequently formulated the definition that burnout represented a loss of concern for people with whom one is working, in response to job-related stress.

With the generally consistent pattern of findings that emerged linking burnout with various aspects of personal dysfunction, a more specific syndrome was postulated, together with an instrument for its measurement (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). The definition that appeared most recently was thus not based on theory but derived empirically, and states that burnout is:

> "... a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity"
> (Maslach and Jackson, 1984a: 134)

This latest definition specifies 'people in some capacity' rather than people working solely in the human service professions, and reflects the more contemporary recognition that burnout is a possibility for all workers (Brown et al, 1977; Cherniss, 1980, 1982; Cherniss et al, 1976; Cooper and Payne, 1978; Etzion, 1984; Farber, 1983; Gaines and Jermier, 1983; Glicken, 1983; Golembiewski et al, 1983; Lang, 1985; Maslach and Jackson, 1979; Strümpfer, 1983a) whether they work with people or not (Maslach and Jackson, 1984a).

There is general concensus with Maslach and Jackson's (1984a) comprehensive definition, while some researchers make additional observations. Etzion (1984) contends that chronic day to day stresses rather than unique critical life events should be regarded as central factors in producing burnout, and that it is a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion. Farber (1983) described it as a

complex of psychological characteristics that reflect features of greater society rather than solely the individual. In a similar vein Glicken and Janka (1984) distinguish between burnout and 'cop-out' by maintaining that 'cop-out' stems from attitudes that contribute to burnout-like symptoms, and constitutes behaviour that forestalls changes in work or responsibilities that might alleviate the disenchantment with work, whereas burnout stems from actual irritants in the workplace. Kahn (1978) adds to Maslach and Jackson's definition by saying burnout is a syndrome of inappropriate towards clients and towards the self, while Harvey (1981) specifically conceptualises burnout as the need to distance oneself from others.

A concept closely associated with burnout is that of tedium (Pines and Aronson, 1981) which implies both monotony and the state of being bored (Collins Dictionary, 1979). Tedium is described as the general experience of physical, emotional and attitudinal exhaustion, but Pines and Aronson (1981) differentiate burnout from tedium by saying that while in symptomatology they are similar, in origin they are different. Where burnout is the result of constant or repeated emotional pressure associated with intense involvement with people over long periods of time, tedium lacks the interpersonal factor and is merely the result of any prolonged chronic (mental, physical or emotional) pressures. Exhaustion presumes prior states of high arousal, in contrast to tedium, which is more likely to be experienced in occupations where work is monotonous or boring (Jackson, Schwab and Schuler, 1986). However, tedium is always part of the burnout syndrome. For purposes of this study, as the term 'burnout' appears more widely accepted, it will be used to incorporate all the symptoms

common to both tedium and burnout, regardless of their origin. The term 'burnout' is also justified in that all individuals experience in their daily lives some degree of intense involvement with other people in dealing with personal and interpersonal problems, regardless of whether this involves a specifically human service orientation.

There is no single definition of burnout that is accepted as a universal. Definitions vary in that some are limited and others are more wide-ranging. Some are precise and others are global. What is at the common core, however, are the similarities (Maslach, 1982b). Burnout:

(1) occurs at the individual level;

(2) is an internal psychological experience involving feelings, attitudes, motives and expectations;

(3) is a negative experience with negative consequences.

The pattern that emerges involves some key dimensions for which there is majority agreement, the first of which is exhaustion. Also described as wearing out, loss of energy and debilitation, this exhaustion may be physical, as is ordinary fatigue, but more often a psychological or emotional exhaustion is central to the burnout experience. Gaines and Jermier (1983) describe it as closer to chronic fatigue, because of its pervasive and enduring qualities. The result is a loss of feeling and concern, and a loss of trust, interest and spirit. There is the impression that one needs all of the little emotional energy that is left in order to keep going through the motions of life. Some professionals feel they have nothing left to give anyone else. One lawyer said:

> "A few years ago I felt that life was an eternal feeling of exuberance and joy, I liked my work and I had a very active social life. Now I feel my job is a dead end. My emotional resources are drained, my best friends irritate me, I do not know my children, and I do not have the emotional energy to be their friend. I find it hard to be polite and tolerant of my clients. I became immersed in self-pity and all I want is to be left alone." (Pines and Aronson, 1981: 18)

A teacher interviewed by Maslach (1982a) said:

> "Everyday I was knocking myself out at school - for the kids primarily, but also to prove to others (and myself) that I was a good teacher. I would really be emotionally drained, but all I had to come home to was the cat." Her motto might have been, "I gave at the office - who will give me something back?" (Maslach, 1982a: 3)

The second dimension can be described as depersonalisation, and is most commonly associated with people working in human service occupations (Jackson, Schwab and Schuler, 1986) although it is a typical symptom which develops during burnout. It involves a negative shift in responses to others, which continues to accumulate, and which includes inappropriate attitudes, irritability and loss of idealism. One newly appointed college professor began to find no escape from the students she had always promised to herself she would help unfailingly, no matter the difficulty or inconvenience to herself. She started to see them by appointment only, began to lock her door, and developed 'undergraduatitis' or student phobia.

> "I find myself crossing the street whenever I see someone in their twenties approaching. I do not think I like teaching anymore." (Pines and Aronson, 1981: 20)

People tend to be treated as objects or as aggregates of problems rather than as individuals. While moderate levels of detached concern toward clients is appropriate and necessary for effective performance in some occupations (Maslach, 1982a), excessive detachment with too

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People tend to be treated as objects or as aggregates of problems rather than as individuals. While moderate levels of detached concern toward clients is appropriate and necessary for effective performance in some occupations (Maslach, 1982a), excessive detachment with too

little concern is assumed to exist when a staff member reports feelings of callousness and cynicism. As one New York policeman stated:

> "You change when you become a cop - you become tough and hard and cynical. You have to condition yourself to be that way in order to survive this job. And sometimes, without realizing it, you act that way all the time, even with your wife and kids. But it's something you have to do because if you start getting emotionally involved with what happens at work, you'll wind up in Bellevue (psychiatric hospital)." (Maslach, 1982a: 4)

Similarly, social workers report that they begin to despise everyone and find it impossible to conceal their contempt, or just do not care any more.

The third dimension involves a negative response towards oneself and one's personal accomplishments; variously described as lowered self-esteem, withdrawal, low morale, reduced productivity or capability, and an inability to cope, this example illustrates the dimension:

> "I am a psychologist, going on my third year of employment as a therapist in a community mental health center. I have seen myself change from an avid, eager, open-minded, caring person to an extremely cynical, not-giving-a-damn individual in just two and a half years. I'm only twenty-six, and I've already developed an ulcer from doing continuous work in crisis intervention. I've gone through drinking to relax enough to go to sleep, tranquilizers, stretching my sick leave to its ultimate limit, and so on. At this point, to get through the year, I've chosen to step into the attitude of going to the mental health center as if I were working at GM, Delco, or Frigidaire factories - that's what it has become here, a mental health factory! I am slowly, painfully beginning to realize that I need time away from constantly dealing with other people's sorrows, and that in order to head off the deadness that is beginning to happen inside of me, I must get away, apply for a month or so leave of absence, maybe more - when I start shaking just upon entering the office, then I know that's it. It hurts to feel like a failure as a therapist in terms of not being able to handle the pressure, but it's better that I do something about it now, rather than commit suicide later after letting it build up much longer." (Maslach, 1982a: 6)

These three dimensions all involve emotional aspects, and consequent changes in personal behaviour may be considered an outcome of the

psychological state induced by burnout. This changed behaviour can be regarded as an inadequate coping mechanism used consistently by the person to reduce stress. However, the effect is invariably an exacerbation of the stress experience because burnout is a process that is self-reinforcing (Cherniss, 1980).

2.4 Appropriateness of the term 'burnout'

Is 'burnout' a suitable term for what has been described above? Use of the word 'burnout' has changed over the years, and there is the concern that it will become a misnoma and be brushed aside as some trendy buzzword (Maslach, 1982b). Fifty years ago it was used to describe fading artistes and sportsmen, and in the 1960's it was used colloquially to refer to the effects of chronic drug abuse, for example, being 'burned out' on drugs. In 1961 Graham Greene wrote 'A Burnt-out Case', attributing a different inference to the term, and this probably serves as the precursor of the modern meaning in that the main character displayed the symptoms of despondency and disillusionment commonly associated with burnout today. However, as long ago as 1844, Marx wrote a description of the alienated worker which accords remarkably with current descriptions of burnout (Farber, 1983), and aspects of alienation (as in estrangement from self, other people, and occupation or profession) are characteristic of the burned out individual (Lang, 1985).

'Burnout' is unfortunately often used for the sake of convenience or through carelessness in referring to a host of conditions; depression,

alienation, apathy, boredom, 'blue-collar blues', midlife crisis, job stress are all too readily subsumed under the word 'burnout' (Maslach, 1982b; Pfifferling and Eckel, 1982). It is also commonly confused with the term 'cop-out', which refers specifically to people who choose to avoid facing up to their responsibilities (Glicken and Janka, 1984; Maslach, 1982b; Morrow, 1981). By contrast, Strümpfer (1983a) uses 'burnout' in a specific sense: it is the end stage of severe strain, and the consequence of prolonged exposure to certain job stressors.

During the 1970's the psychoanalyst Freudenberger (1974, 1975) was probably the first person to use the term in its present sense, to denote a state of physical and emotional depletion resulting from conditions at work. He maintains that burnout typically affects people of modern society who live under the strain of our complex world, with the result that:

> "... their inner resources are consumed as if by fire, leaving a great emptiness inside." (Freudenberger, 1980: xv)

Though a deceptively simple observation, Freudenberger's statement fittingly describes the person depleted by burnout, and serves as a suitable starting point for the layman to acknowledge the seriousness of the affliction.

Because of over popularisation, a term such as 'burnout' which has assumed vernacular status may be in danger of losing its usefulness and result in problems regarding the true gravity of the condition. There already prevails an attitude which dismisses job stress and burnout merely because they have always been there (and accepted) as problems (Paine, 1982). Alternatively, some critics have argued that burnout

is a popular term that essentially creates a condition which then has to be addressed (Maslach, 1982b). Others see burnout simply as a currently acceptable excuse for failure and question whether 'burnout' as a description of behaviour has any diagnostic, predictive or therapeutic utility (Farber, 1983). It is clear that there is a need to derive some basic commonalities of definition and application for the term in order to accord it the concern it warrants, and so that its overuse and overextension do not render it meaningless.

The word 'burnout' is therefore appropriate preferably only when it is used as an umbrella term referring to the three related but loosely coupled reactions to an occupation: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment. This three-component distinction is of value when investigating differential patterns of correlations between the individual components and other variables (Jackson, Schwab and Schuler, 1986; Savicki and Cooley, 1983; Schwab and Iwanicki, 1982). In the present study the Maslach and Jackson (1984a) definition of burnout which specifies the three components is found to be the most broad and comprehensive in terms of the earlier discussion, and consequently the Maslach Burnout Inventory (1981) is used to measure burnout.

2.5 Theories of burnout

Just as common themes are discernable regarding the numerous definitions of burnout, so do common themes emerge with regard to the theories (Burke and Deszca, 1982, 1986; Carroll and White, 1982;

Cherniss, 1980; Farber, 1983; Freudenberger, 1983; Harrison, 1983; Heifetz and Bersani, 1983; Golembiewski et al, 1983; Maslach, 1982b; Maslach and Jackson, 1981; Paine, 1982; Shinn, 1982):

(1) Burnout is no longer conceptualised solely within a medical model framework;

(2) models no longer incorporate a solely linear relationship linking stress and burnout;

(3) models are integrative (burnout is not attributable to exclusively work-related stress or intrapsychic factors: personality variables, mediational processes, social-historical factors and ecological issues are involved);

(4) burnout incorporates sequential stages in its development.

Freudenberger, together with Maslach and Pines, pioneered the study of burnout during the 1970's, and consequently legitimised its status as a critical social issue (Farber, 1983). The two perspectives, that is, the clinical approach of Freudenberger and the empirical approach of Maslach and Pines, have complemented one another well. Not only are the findings on each perspective for the most part mutually corroborative, but the two perspectives have emphasised the importance of an integration framework for burnout research. Freudenberger's (1974, 1980) model is based primarily on a paradigm emphasising the psychology of the individual, while Maslach and Pines have studied burnout from a social psychological, research- oriented perspective, with a heavier focus on the relationship between environmental and individual factors. The present study relies on both perspectives: it emphasises the psychology of the individual but studies this within a social psychological framework.

A problem in conceptualising burnout within the medical model framework is the tendency to perceive individuals as physically ill or suffering from maladaptive behaviour, or as being constantly stressed (Freudenberger, 1983). In other words, it presupposes that people who are able to deal with stress have better functioning defenses (or coping mechanisms) available but that they are as constantly stressed as those who break down. Therefore, in the psychoanalytic model one automatically searches for that which stress-prone individuals lack (such as defenses and coping mechanisms) rather than what they have or do (for example, perceive stressors where others do not). Everyone is not stressed all the time, which is an implication of the model (Hogan and Hogan, 1982).

By using a medical model framework it is easy to disregard the psychosocial context in which burnout occurs (psychological variables within the individual in addition to the dynamic interchange between person and environment), as well as taking into account changes in values and the cultural shift which continually operate. For example, family units have changed, in constitution and accessibility, so changing the support network. Meier (1983) introduces a model of burnout which uses psychoanalytic-related constructs, yet places emphasis on the working environment. It therefore takes an interactionist position but contrasts with the current trend which attributes much of the cause of burnout to organisational factors. Very often the implication is that in certain jobs there is little the individual can do to prevent burnout, but Meier (1983) contends that the individual's cognitive and contextual processing of environmental events is not solely intrapsychic, rather it can be very much

influenced by the individual's expectations (Bandura, 1977). The model predicts that reinforcement expectation, outcome expectations, and efficacy expectations directly influence the subjective experience of burnout and that these expectations are presumed to result from repeated learning experiences on the job (Meier, 1983). This model therefore emphasises the cognitive and behavioural aspects of burnout and so complements the affective emphasis of Freudenberger and Maslach.

The occurrence of burnout has also been explained in terms of perceptions of role incompetence and alienation (Harrison, 1983) which is again based on the interaction concept; indeed, motivational erosion appears to be a typical feature of burnout, where initial high expectations dwindle to ultimate disillusionment (Cherniss, 1980, 1982; Edelwich and Brodsky, 1980, 1982; Heifetz and Bersani, 1983; Lasch, 1979). The more recent 'deficit' models of burnout that have emerged (Cherniss and Krantz, 1983; Eisenstat and Felner, 1983; Fibkins, 1983; Ianni and Reuss-Ianni, 1983; Heifetz and Bersani, 1983; Jayaratne and Chess, 1983) point to discrepancies between the demands and capacities of individuals, and many cite lack or loss of motivation as one of the precipitating factors of burnout.

Ecological models (Cherniss, 1982; Carroll and White, 1982; Freudenberger, 1979, 1983) specifically emphasise defective interaction between person and environment to explain burnout, but cybernetic principles inevitably form the basis for a realistic understanding of what causes burnout.

The fourth theme common to contemporary burnout theory concerns its course of development. It is generally acknowledged that burnout occurs in an insidious fashion, and does not appear as the result of one or two traumatic events (Pines and Aronson, 1981; Etzion, 1984). Furthermore, there is a growing implication that it is reasonable to conceptualise burnout as occurring in progressive distinct stages (Berkeley Planning Associates, 1977; Burke and Deszca, 1982, 1986; Cherniss, 1980, 1982; Edelwich and Brodsky, 1980, 1982; Farber, 1983; Gaines and Jermier, 1983; Glicken and Janka, 1984; Golembiewski et al, 1983; Maslach, 1982(a); Perlman and Hartman, 1981, 1982; Pfiffering and Eckel, 1982). These stages may vary across individuals (Farber, 1983). Golembiewski et al (1983) found that depersonalisation occurred as an initial phase prior to reduced personal accomplishment, with emotional exhaustion following the heightening of the first two stages but proving to be the most important contributor to burnout. This was revealed by observations in numerous organisations, and empirical testing of the model actually confirmed eight progressive phases. Burke and Deszca (1986) found a similar pattern in their research, where burnout was initially manifested in feelings of depersonalisation and culminated finally in emotional exhaustion.

More general consensus has been given to emotional exhaustion as the first stage of burnout, however, and this is depicted as the initial strain in FIGURE 3, resulting from cumulative effects of work stresses.

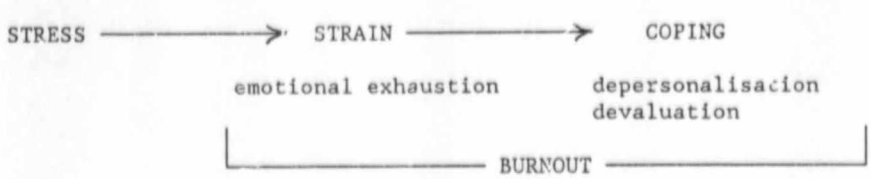


FIGURE 3: Model of the burnout process
(Gaines and Jermier, 1983: 568)

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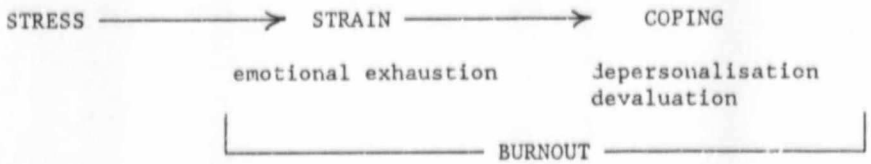


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Though there is great variation in the conceptualisation of stress and burnout certain recurrent issues and common themes do predominate. Of particular importance is that stress and burnout be understood, not within a confining framework (such as the clinical approach) but as integrated issues of the wider organisational and societal context. Burnout is perhaps best described as an ecological dysfunction (Carroll and White, 1982), and best encapsulated in the framework developed by Maslach and Jackson. It follows that the most appropriate measure is the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach and Jackson, 1981).

The variation in theory at the present time is useful for a number of reasons: it can enhance the understanding of what burnout is and how it develops; it can aid in the development of new intervention and prevention strategies. It can also guide future research, and theories and research trends emanating from the last few years have prompted the current research study. Typically the theories encompass the influence of personality variables (such as expectations of competence and success), while the research emphasises the integrative effects of personal, organisational and social factors, but with perhaps too little emphasis on the role of personal variables. Consequently these will be discussed in due course in their capacity as contributors to, or moderators of, burnout.

Systematic descriptive research has already made a sizeable contribution to knowledge on burnout, and so further progress in the field is more likely to come from research-based models which allow for causal inferences to be derived via appropriate research designs.

A review of the literature on burnout research follows, which gives the general pattern of how this research has developed, but which concentrates on those areas which are more pertinent to the present study.

3. REVIEW OF THE BURNOUT RESEARCH LITERATURE

The greater part of the early literature on burnout was typically descriptive and anecdotal, and this was complemented by a burgeoning of theories as to the causes of burnout and suggestions as to methods of remedying and solving the problems associated with it.

The human service movement provided the initial area of research interest, because burnout was first identified as a distinct phenomenon characteristic of workers deeply involved with other people (Cherniss, 1980; Freudenberger, 1974, 1975; Maslach, 1973, 1976, 1982a; Maslach and Jackson, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1984a, 1984b; Maslach and Pines, 1977, 1979; Pines and Aronson, 1981). Burnout is particularly noticeable in such professions as doctoring, nursing, teaching, legal services, mental health, religious and social work, and in the police force, but this may be due in the main to publicity pertaining to occupations which are generally regarded as highly responsible. These types of occupation tend to be the target of adverse and widespread criticism in the media if responsibilities are seen to have been abused or if unfortunate incidents occur.

In the earlier publications, Freudenberger (1974, 1975, 1977) speculated as to the underlying mechanisms of burnout, and offered suggestions for its prevention and remediation. His predominantly

clinical approach complemented that of Maslach, Pines and their colleagues, who developed an empirical foundation for the study of burnout using a social psychological approach, and also complemented that of Cherniss, who concentrated on the institutional and organisational context.

The Pines and Aronson (1981) approach to burnout was valuable through its specific reference to the consequences of tedium, which is found to occur in all areas of daily life and work. They drew attention to cultural differences in methods of dealing with stress and burnout in the research project that covered the period 1976 to 1980, and involved 3 916 students and professionals from the United States, Canada, Japan and Israel. A mean value for life and work tedium was presented for the different sample groups, and for men and women, and its relationship to other variables was examined. Cultural differences in coping were investigated using a categorisation of four types of strategy, which showed that Israelis used more direct-active coping techniques, such as changing the source of stress, confronting it and trying to find positive aspects in the situation, than did American managers and professionals. The latter used more direct-inactive techniques such as ignoring the stress source, avoiding it, and leaving the situation. They also used more indirect-active techniques such as talking about the source, changing the self and getting involved in other situations, as well as indirect- inactive diversions such as drinking, getting sick and collapsing.

This evidence lends support to the idea by Morrow (1981) that there may be cultural differences in reacting to stress responses which

come into operation through certain socialised procedures. The present research enters a fresh cultural environment: as a pilot study Caucasian male MBA students will provide information on moderators of the stress-burnout relationship, and this may lead to further research among the emerging managerial contingent of both whites and blacks.

Cherniss and his associates (1976, 1978, 1980), on the other hand, stressed the organisational and cultural environments within which individuals burn out. In their research, various correlates of job satisfaction were specified in community mental health settings, and specific sources of frustration were examined. Cherniss (1980) maintains that efficacy and competence are especially critical for persons engaged in human service work; frequently such work is regarded as a 'calling' and is the consequence of considerable psychological investment and preparation from an early age. However, this efficacy and competence is easily frustrated by the very nature of the work. Clients are usually those hampered with difficulties, which is tedious in itself, and while the caregiver can help with some problems (for example, psychological counselling) there are often others over which there is no control (such as lack of sufficient income). Other frequent sources of frustration to one's sense of competence are given as inadequate or restrictive supervision, lack of autonomy, excessive case load, organisational conflict, and lack of support within the institution, plus a general 'bureaucratic mentality' (Cherniss, 1980: 105; 1982). In the present study it is proposed that heightened feelings of self-efficacy may assist in delaying or preventing the development of burnout, despite a situation involving heavy workload and possible lack of automony and feedback.

A sense of accomplishment is an important factor to job satisfaction, and as human service work involves the direct responsibility for the well- being of others, errors and failures are deemed more serious for the individual than in some other professions; public reaction is also more easily evoked if 'things go wrong'. The sense of accomplishment and effective performance is easily frustrated by the typical dearth of feedback from clients, either in their personal capacity or in terms of outcomes generally. Occasionally clients do not even really want to be helped, and become apathetic or destructive. There is also a problem where 'person-role conflict' arises: certain behaviour is required on the part of the helper which is inconsistent with his own abilities or moral values. Perhaps he also feels that he has insufficient knowledge and skills to help a particular client (Cherniss, 1980).

In Cherniss's (1980) view client motivation is a necessary resource for meeting the demands of helping relationships, and any gap between resources and demand will create a great deal of stress and strain. Sometimes a helper feels increasingly ineffective to change situations and as a result may begin to withdraw emotionally from the work. This is a different concept from 'detached concern', and represents the beginnings of burnout.

Motivational issues have been explored by Hackman and Oldham (1975), identifying such issues as lack of challenge and stimulation in occupations generally. Their Job Diagnostic Survey (1975) has been valuable in studies of burnout, such as Pines and Kafry's (1981) research into tedium in the life and work of professional women. The

present study utilizes a challenging work context to investigate the possibility that high achievement motive moderates the relationship between occupational stress and the onset of burnout.

It is of note that between 1974 and 1979 only the Berkeley Planning Associates (1977) and Maslach and Jackson explored underlying dimensions of burnout or provided data at other than the descriptive level. Toward the end of the 1970's the interest in burnout was extended to other than the human services sphere, and it was accepted as a problem that can occur in all occupations, for anyone, at any level (Cherniss, 1980; Hackman and Oldham, 1975; Maslach, 1982a). Even traditionally viewed 'nonwork' areas such as the homemaker's environment subjects the individual to psychological strain linked with chronic day to day stresses or emotionally demanding situations (Maslach, 1982a; Pines and Aronson, 1981). It was during this period that the various scales to measure burnout were developed. The earliest utilized the Berkeley Planning Associates' (1977) definition of burnout as job alienation, and the scale is highly related to job satisfaction (r = 0,59); however, burnout is now conceptualised as encompassing far more than merely the individual and his or her immediate work environment.

Two scales were produced in 1980, the one being a self-assessment measure (it has no psychometric properties) rather than an intended research tool. Freudenberger and Richelson's (1980) scale measures exhaustion, sadness and withdrawal from routine activities, and a further content area related to burnout. Behavioural and physiological items in addition to cognitive and emotional ones are

included in the Staff Burnout Scale developed by Jones (1980). Factors explicitly assessed are tension, job dissatisfaction, physical illness/distress and unprofessional patient relationships, and the scale includes an index of social desirability.

The Pines and Aronson (1981) Tedium scale is applicable to human service and commercial settings, and covers physical, emotional and mental experiences and attitudes which are then combined into a single score. However, it expands on the emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation components of burnout to the detriment of measuring personal accomplishment. Perhaps the most comprehensive scale is the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach and Jackson, 1981) which was developed empirically for use in the human service professions, but which has been proved suitable for the commercial sector (Golembiewski et al, 1983). As it was found the most suitable for the present study it is described in more detail in the Methodology section.

Though Maslach and Jackson (1981) stipulate that an overall burnout score is not appropriate for the multidimensional construct of burnout, several researchers have tried to overcome this restriction for statistical analysis purposes. They include Golembiewski et al (1983) who derived a single score, and Pratt and Barling (1987), Iwanicki and Schwab (1981), Russel et al (1987), and Jackson, Schuler and Schwab (1986), who have derived three scores. King and Beehr (1983) and Brookings et al (1985) have found through principal components item factor analysis that emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation items all load heavily on the same factor, and there is consequently some reluctance to consider the two subscales

separately. Lack of personal accomplishment appeared not to be a critical feature of the burnout phenomenon as it is largely independent of the other two factors.

Though the organisational environment had always been recognised as a possible cause and prospective solution for burnout, greater interest in this issue developed towards the end of the 1970's. Where writings cited one cause of burnout 'organisation' was chosen far more frequently than 'individual' (Perlman and Hartman, 1982).

With the development of the measuring instruments, too, research studies began to proliferate. Typically though, they are one-off correlational investigations of a limited set of variables with small populations (Paine, 1982). Of the research which presented statistical findings in the period to the early 1980's, five groups of variables were found as significantly related to burnout (Perlman and Hartman, 1982), and these have been incorporated into a broad model which integrates the perception and impact of stress sources with four stages of burnout (Perlman and Hartman, 1982). Of the five groups of variables associated with burnout, organisational characteristics include workload, degree of formalisation, turnover rate and staff size; perceptions of the organisation include staff, peer and administrative support, communication clarity, rules, innovation and leadership; role perceptions include autonomy, work pressure, meaningfulness and feedback; outcome variables comprise satisfaction and turnover; finally, individual characteristics include social support, sex, age, leisure and ego level. TABLE 6 depicts variables

found to be significantly related to burnout. The present research endeavours to incorporate aspects of these five categories into the study design.

TABLE 6: Variables found to be significantly related to burnout

Organisation characteristics	Perceptions of organisations	Perceptions of role	Individual characteristics	Outcome
Caseload	Leadership	Autonomy	Family/friends support	Satisfaction
Formalisation	Communication	Job Involvement	Sex	Turnover
Turnover rate	Staff support	Being supervised	Age	
Staff size	Peers	Work pressure	Tenure	
	Clarity	Feedback	Ego level	
	Rules and procedures	Accomplishment		
	Innovation	Meaningfulness		
	Administrative support			

(Perlman and Hartman, 1982: 294)

Jackson and Schuler (1983) specify lack of rewards, particularly the absence of positive feedback, lack of control, lack of clarity and lack of support, in contributing to organisational stress most likely to produce burnout. With regard to control, it has been suggested that employees who participate in decision-making processes, both personal and organisational, become more motivated and experience less role conflict and ambiguity than those who are denied the opportunity (Deci, 1980; Jackson, 1983; Maslach and Jackson, 1982). Control is recognised as a fundamental factor in the prevention of burnout (Maslach, 1982a). The present research employs a hardiness measure which incorporates items taken directly from the Rotter (1966) Internal- External Scale that measures personal control.

Research of a more comprehensive nature has emerged during the last decade: it has stressed the interactive nature of personal, organisational and social variables, and it has invariably exhibited a greater concern with statistical analyses. Much interest has been taken in the work environment, particularly with regard to job turnover (Berkeley Planning Associates, 1977; Bloch, 1977; Cooper and Marshall, 1980; Duke, 1984; Fimian and Blanton, 1987, Freudenberger, 1975; Ianni and Reuss-Ianni, 1983; Jackson, Schuler and Schwab, 1986; Kyriacou, 1980; Maslach, 1976; Mobley, Horner and Hollingsworth, 1978; Pines and Aronson, 1981; Shinn, 1982), role stressors (Fimian and Blanton, 1987; Jackson, Schuler and Schwab, 1986; Pines, 1982), and the spillover effects of burnout into social and family life (Barling and Rosenbaum, 1986; Burke and Deszca, 1986; Lang, 1985; Maslach and Jackson, 1982; Pavell, 1986). In addition, the role of the supervisor has recently been attracting research (Berkeley Planning Associates, 1977; Bluen, 1986; Burke and Deszca, 1986; Cherniss, 1980; Fisher, 1984; Hall and Savery, 1986; Jackson et al, 1987; Jackson, Schuler and Schwab, 1986; Pines, 1982; Pratt and Barling, 1987; Russel et al, 1987; Shapiro, 1982; Shinn, 1982).

The work on role stressors is relevant to the present research. Role stressors such as role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload are major determinants of stress in the workplace (Kahn, 1974), and as such are related to burnout (Caplan and Jones, 1975; Cherniss, 1980; French and Caplan, 1972; Jackson, 1983; Jackson, Schuler and Schwab, 1986; Jackson and Schuler, 1983; Maslach and Jackson, 1981, 1984a, 1984b; Pines, 1982). The two aspects of role overload have already been discussed, and it is one of the most common complaints among

those who work in organisations (Farber, 1983) and is repeatedly found a positive correlate of burnout (Pines, 1982). In one sample of 52 Social Security Administration workers the correlation was $r = 0,30$ and in a sample of 725 human service professionals $r = 0,35$ (both $p<0,05$) (Pines, 1982). Pines (1982) cites other environmental stressors, such as comfortable work location (negatively correlated with burnout) and noise (positively correlated) and work relations, sharing, time out and support, all of which at an acceptable or pleasant level showed negative correlations with burnout (Pines, 1982).

The emotional exhaustion dimension of burnout has been found to be the most applicable to occupations other than human services, because of its similarity to chronic fatigue, for example it appears generalisable to air traffic controllers, miners, steel workers, assemblers and office personnel (Gaines and Jermier, 1983). Internal organisational practices such as promotional opportunity and rule inflexibility have been investigated in a situation involving both this fatigue, and the strain of dealing with members of the public and certain forms of bureaucracy, the police force (Gaines and Jermier, 1983). In terms of its independent effect frequency of exhaustion was significantly related to rule inflexibility ($F = 7,40$, $p<0,01$), while promotion opportunity accounted for approximately 17% of the variance in frequency of exhaustion when the effects of departmental context were also taken into account. Promotion opportunity was the only significant predictor of intensity of exhaustion ($F = 12,79$, $p<0,01$), accounting for almost 14% of the criterion variance when considered in additive combination with departmental context. The

study demonstrated that the environmental stressor of work context has an important influence on the development of burnout. Exhaustion measured differently according to the nature of the department, that is, whether it involved patrol, investigatory or service bureau work: the investigations bureau, possibly because of its higher status personnel and more enriched work content, produced lower levels of emotional exhaustion.

The study underscores the interactive approach essential to any burnout research. It was found that the stress involved in policing is not created in the work itself, as some is the result of internal organisational processes, and much is the result of hours of monotony coupled with periods of frantic activity. Factors of the societal context were shown to be significant in the police force, as it represents both a coercive instrument of state power yet also an organisation delivering invaluable human services. This ambivalence is a further source of job stress in the form of conflict, contradiction and tension. The study demonstrates that an easing in emotional exhaustion could probably best come from changes in administrative practices.

Of other work-related stressors, administrative and organisational interference, and bureaucracy (as mentioned earlier with reference to Cherniss, 1980, and Hall and Savery, 1986) have been correlated with high degrees of burnout. Pines (1982) has found correlations of r = 0,22 and 0,24 (p = <0,05) in studies of human service professionals, while bureaucratic features such as 'red tape', paperwork and communication problems have shown a correlation of r = 0,40 (p = <0,05) in research involving 101 Israeli managers.

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Work variety and burnout have shown negative correlations of 0,35 and 0,32 (p = <0,05); lack of rewards is highly correlated with burnout (r = -0,35, -0,47, p = <0,05) in commercial and human service organisations respectively (Pines, 1982); substantial feedback from supervisors and administrators lowers the likelihood of burnout, and the correlation between social feedback and burnout was found to be r = -0,36 and -0,32 (p = <0,05) in two studies involving social service and mental retardation workers respectively (Pines, 1982).

Pines (1982) has taken a social psychological perspective, not to deny the importance of individual traits and dispositions, but to emphasise the importance of the environmental component in producing burnout, in spite of individual differences. The question presents itself 'could better training, the selection of a more appropriate occupation and the identification of individuals with intra-personal defenses against burnout, somehow contribute to the selection of a work environment less likely to precipitate burnout?' It is suggested that future studies along the lines of Pines's (1982) largely correlational research should include an examination of these issues.

Much of the research referred to so far has investigated the association between components of burnout and a large array of variables (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). Leiter and Meechan's (1986) study involving aspects of role structure provides a further example of this type of investigation. Several more recent studies have investigated moderator variables in terms of their direct or indirect relationships with burnout.

With regard to marital relationships, the wellbeing of spouses of stressed workers is currently attracting research. Maslach and Jackson (1982) have indicated that burnout is associated with wives' perceptions that their police officer husbands exhibit anger at home, spend off-hours away from the family, come home exhausted and tense, have few friends, and suffer from insomnia. Stress is typically carried home, in most professions, and is capable of producing negative consequences, although those may be attenuated to some extent by the spouse's personality characteristics and the use of supporting mechanisms such as social support systems. However, in a recent study Pavett (1986) found that while professional requirements and demands in high stress occupations probably serve as sources of stress with negative effects for spouses, stress-outcome relationships did not appear to be moderated by either Type A personality (Friedman and Rosenman, 1974) or the use of social support networks, as had been hypothesised.

In the study on 149 spouses of certified public accountants (Pavett, 1986), the correlation between burnout and stress from the marital relationship with the accountant was quite strong (r = C,60). However, the return rate of respondents was low at only 33% of the population, and the respondents who chose to participate may have represented a skewed sample, for example stressed to the point of anger and frustration. Also, the spouses were not mailed directly but received the questionnaires through their husbands, and so the choice lay with the partner as to whether or not the spouse should complete the questionnaire. This indicated that further research is needed concerning personality variables that may ameliorate second hand as well as direct stress.

Work stress and spouse abuse was investigated as a separate issue from marital dissatisfaction and violence in the recent study by Barling and Rosenbaum (1986), to assess whether wife abuse was a spillover effect from work experiences and stressors. Multivariate analyses of variance suggest that an association did exist, but research focusing on the causal nature of the work stress is warranted because abusive husbands, aware that such behaviour is unacceptable, may report more stressful work events and their higher negative impact as a rationalisation for their abusive behaviour. Since stressful work events demand change, again the issue of the hardy personality arises. Are these abusive husbands, though chronically stressed rather than burned out, low on the hardiness predisposition, or displacing their frustrations and so containing the tendency to burn out? Barling and Rosenbaum (1986) do in fact raise the question of personality hardiness:

> "Because personality hardiness also moderates the effects of fathers' work-related stressors on their marital adjustment (Barling, 1986), it might be worth investigating the role of personality hardiness in the relation of work stress to marital violence." (Barling and Rosenbaum, 1986: 348)

The foregoing studies indicate that marital status will provide a fertile area for future studies on burnout. However, with age as yet considered a more significant factor than marital status (Maslach, 1982a) it was felt that age should take preference in being treated as a covariate in the present pilot study.

With regard to the possibility that certain personality variables may act as moderators in the stress-burnout relationship, there appears to be potential in the various 'deficit' models of burnout presently being promulgated. Mention was made earlier of the frustrations

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